

Midvale Middle School 7852 South Pioneer Street Midvale, Utah 84047

April 24-25, 2007



Utah State Office of Education 250 East 500 South P.O. Box 144200 Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

THE REPORT OF THE VISITING TEAM REVIEWING

Midvale Middle School 7852 South Pioneer Street Midvale, Utah 84047

April 24-25, 2007

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Patti Harrington, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

DIVISION OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SCHOOL SUCCESS

Myron Cottam, Associate Superintendent

Brett Moulding, Director Curriculum and Instruction

Georgia Loutensock, Accreditation Specialist Curriculum and Instruction

Salt Lake City, Utah

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FOREWORD

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, April 24-25, 2007, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of Midvale Middle School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Paula Logan is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Midvale Middle School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at Midvale Middle School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D. State Superintendent of Public Instruction

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MIDVALE MIDDLE SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Paula Logan	Principal
Margarita Cummings	-
Roberto Jimenez	
	-

Counseling

Karen Ward	Counselor
April Sagala	Counselor
Phillip Leatherwood	

Support Staff

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Kimberly Fenton	Darwin Melville	

Faculty

Shelley Allen	Emily Davis	Cari Hauptman
Brenda Anderson	Tamra Dresser	Tawny Hawkins
Sheradee Bradfield	James Findlay	Lisa Heath
Jason Brunander	Marita Fuentes	Eva Ann Jacobs
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Michael Christensen	Mandy George	Jeanine Kuhn-Coker
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Janet Siddoway
Mark Sidesinger
Ffion Soltis
Scott Stucki
Brian Todd
Whitney Winterton

MIDVALE MIDDLE SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

Midvale Middle School is committed to

Rigor Relevance And Responsibility

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- 1. Families, students, faculty, staff and the community share responsibility for student success.
- 2. All students have the right and ability to learn.
- 3. Faculty and staff are committed to every student every day.
- 4. Our learning community is strengthened by our respect for our differences.
- 5. Students will develop and apply problem solving and critical thinking skills.
- 6. Hard work is the key to success.
- 7. Education provides opportunities and helps students reach their greatest potential.

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Verneita R. Hunt, Crestview Elementary School, Granite School District, Visiting Team Chairperson

Willa Jamieson, Eisenhower Junior High School, Granite School District

Mary Ellen Kettle, Altamont High School, Duchesne School District

Georgia Loutensock, Utah State Office of Education

VISITING TEAM REPORT

MIDVALE MIDDLE SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Midvale Middle School was built in 1955 in a suburban neighborhood of Midvale City. Today, Midvale City has 10,730 households with an average of 2.66 persons per house; 25.8 percent of the city's population is under the age of 18.

Midvale Middle School is home to 780 students, 51 faculty members, and 43 staff members. The teacher/student ratio is 1:27, with an average class size of 23 students. Midvale Middle offers a wide variety of extracurricular programs, including Debate Club, Science Olympiad, Math Counts, History Fair, Mock Trial, Model United Nations, and many others programs.

Currently, Midvale Middle School has 241 English language learners which is 31 percent of the student population. There are eighteen Spanish-speaking faculty and staff members and eleven teachers with ESL endorsements. The student population consists of 65.5 Caucasian, 26 Hispanic, and nine percent distributed among Asian, Native American, African-American, and Pacific Islander. Fifty-one percent of students' households are from a low socioeconomic background, 22 percent are single-parent families, and there is a mobility rate of 25 percent.

Midvale Middle School is the only secondary Accelerated Learners' Program for Students (ALPS) in Jordan District. The program provides advanced learners with classes that allow them to complete much of the tenth grade curriculum before leaving middle school. ALPS students comprise 44 percent of the current student population, and come from all across the district.

- a) What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?
 - Midvale Middle School teachers, staff members, and administrators have worked extensively to create their school profile. The department and focus group reports and analyses were far-reaching and well written. It is apparent that the school community has worked hard to make a self-study of the educational culture and climate at the school.
- b) What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?

All CRT and other data should be disaggregated by the full categories of the AYP Report to help Midvale Middle School the administration and staff analyze who is learning and who is not learning. By drilling down to various ethnic,

socioeconomic, and male/female groups, teachers will be able to better differentiate curriculum and instruction for all students, thus boosting student achievement.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

Teachers are encouraged to look at and analyze student test data, as well as other pertinent data, to inform decision making for individual students and for program selection and implementation. Information obtained through this process will drive instruction to help students who are not learning various core concepts.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

a) To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?

Midvale Middle School has twice been granted delays because of administrative changes. The present principal is the third one in four years. Consequently, the school community has been working on the accreditation process for at least five years. The focus groups were restructured after the first administrative change, and edited their written work after the second administrative change. The process has been drawn out for Midvale Middle School, and they are glad to have had the official USOE visit.

Even with the five-year process, the school's administration, teachers, and parents have worked hard developing the profile, collecting data, and serving on committees. There have been only a small number of parents involved, because it is difficult for working parents to attend various meetings.

b) To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?

The Visiting Team found that the school was honest and forthright in the self-study evaluation, including areas of need as well as areas of strength. The members of the school community know where they are and where they want to go with regard to student achievement.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Midvale Middle School's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

1. Resourceful Thinker

- Students will be able to gather, analyze, utilize, and organize information.
- Students will demonstrate effective problem solving skills and strategies across the curriculum.
- Students will improve results in standardized testing by effectively using skills learned in the classroom.

2. Life-Long Learner

- Students will gain basic skills in the use of technology.
- Students will use real-life application and knowledge skills.
- Students will be able to set and work to achieve self-improvement goals related to their learning.

3. Responsible Citizen

- Students will assume responsibility for personal actions.
- Students will develop skills in working effectively with others.
- Students will deal positively with disagreement and conflict caused by diversity of backgrounds, opinions, values, and beliefs.

4. Effective Communicator

- Students will read and comprehend a variety of written materials.
- Students will write with clarity, purpose, and understanding of audience.
- Students will present information orally in an effective manner.

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

a) To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?

The Visiting Team found that the accreditation process started at Midvale Middle School about five years ago. Due to changes in administration three times during that time, the official visit had been postponed twice. As the Visiting Team found through discussion with administration and teachers, there was a great amount of work done collaboratively throughout the past five years to create the various components of the self-study and school profile, including the mission, beliefs, and desired results for student learning (DRSLs). A number of teachers have come and gone, but as each new teacher came to Midvale Middle School, the

faculty brought him or her up to speed on the process and responsibilities of the accreditation work.

b) To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?

Midvale Middle School's belief statements clearly demonstrate that the administration and staff are committed to student achievement. The school's mission and beliefs are well thought out and support the desired results for student learning. The belief statements include expectations of teachers within the confines of lifelong learning and the school community. The teachers and administration are commended for creating high expectations for themselves, as well as students.

c) To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?

The DRSLs are closely aligned to the school's mission and belief statements. From discussions of the creation of the DRSLs with the school community, it was apparent that the mission and belief statements drove the selection of the school's desired results for student learning.

Curriculum Development:

a) To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?

The staff is involved in gaining a greater understanding of the standards and objectives of the Utah Core Curriculum, and each staff member is responsible for ensuring that his or her lessons plans are aligned with the Core Curriculum. The seeds of teacher/team collaboration have been planted, have sprouted, and are growing. Grade level teams are meeting on an informal basis, and teachers are voicing the benefits they are experiencing as a result of these meetings.

It is recommended that more collaboration between subjects and grade levels be implemented in order to make the education process more efficient and help students gain a more holistic view of the curriculum.

b) To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?

There is some evidence of consideration of the desired results for student learning within each departmental report. However, it appears that the inclusion of the

DRSLs in the curriculum happens almost by accident. There appears to be variance within departments as to the process to be used to implement the DRSLs. There does not seem to be a school-wide collaborative effort to focus curricula on the school's DRSLs.

Quality Instructional Design:

- a) To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?
 - Individual teachers use a wide variety of learning experiences to engage students. The Visiting Team observed direct instruction, class discussions, small groups, presentations, projects, differentiation, peer tutoring, open-ended questions, hands-on techniques, and role playing. The Visiting Team suggests that the staff collaboratively research and implement multiple teaching strategies that align with the goals and standards for student learning.
- b) To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?
 - Teachers employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure that the needs of different learners are met. Instructional strategies incorporated into lesson plans include self-review and reflection, peer collaboration and review, journal writing, self-starters, group discussions, and self-directed learning. Technology is used in many classrooms and allows students the opportunity to apply technology in problem-solving situations and projects.
- c) To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?
 - Midvale Middle School provides several programs that support student learning. The library is open one hour before school and half an hour after school for student use. Teachers provide individual help to students during homeroom, and before and after school. Students have opportunities to participate in a range of activities, including Science Fair, History Fair, Career Day, MESA, debate, the school literary magazine, Math Counts, etc.

Quality Assessment Systems:

- a) To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?
 - Teachers have developed individual classroom assessments such as quizzes, unit tests, "walk aways," and portfolios to gauge student achievement. However, most

school-wide assessments are limited to state and norm-referenced tests, i.e., CRTs, the Iowa Basic Skills Test, and the Direct Writing Assessment. It is recommended that course- and grade-level assessments be developed with benchmarks to track student achievement as students move throughout the school.

b) To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?

A range of classroom assessments are being using that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards. A variety of projects, products, and presentations were evident in many classrooms. The staff is encouraged to identify and develop assessments that are data-driven. Careful analysis and disaggregation of the data should be done once the data is collected.

c) To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?

Teachers are to be commended for their varied use of assessment tools. However, little evidence was provided that explained what other types of assessments have been used. There is a need to collaborate and discuss performance standards. Departments need to create assessment programs that correlate to the State Core Curriculum and establish benchmarks of student learning. The results of these assessments should define future instruction and assessments.

Leadership for School Improvement:

a) To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?

The Visiting Team observed that the administrative team at Midvale Middle School is committed to creating an environment of excellence in teaching and student learning. Teachers express appreciation to the administration for trusting them with decision making with regard to program selection and implementation of curricula. Professional development is dedicated to improving teachers' instructional delivery.

b) To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?

The Visiting Team observed evidence of using data to make decisions; however, it is recommended that this practice be continued and expanded to all grade level teams and departments. Teachers are encouraged to look at and analyze student test data, as well as other pertinent data, to inform decision making for individual students and for program selection and implementation.

- c) To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?
 - The school leadership is actively learning more about the use of data in decision making and as a tool to guide instructional delivery. The administration is monitoring progress and desires a greater depth of understanding of data usage to inform and guide their decision making.
- d) To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?
 - The versatility of the administration is evident, with each person's strengths used to best advantage in school management decisions and organization. The custodial staff needs to be commended for its efforts to maintain a school that staff, students, and parents are proud of. There were several observations of custodial staff members interacting with students in a very positive manner.
- e) To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?
 - The Visiting Team observed that teachers believe there is a fair and equitable allocation of funds and resources that aligns with instructional goals and the achievement of the school-wide plan. Trust LAND funds and other funds are allocated for student academic improvement.
- f) To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?
 - The Visiting Team notes the school has an active and involved PTSA, Community Council, and Comprehensive Guidance Department. Parents state they believe their voices are heard; however, there is a concern that not all parents are able to voice their desires, due to work schedules and other situational factors that are beyond their control.

Community Building:

- a) To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?
 - The Visiting Team has observed that the faculty and staff at Midvale Middle School recognize the need for more community building within both the school

and the community at large, and are striving to build relationships within those realms. The staff has focused on working to build unity among the students and to make the school a welcoming and safe environment—not only for the students, but for the community as well. Evening community activities, notices in the local papers, bilingual newsletters, and parent-teacher conferences are just a few examples of the steps being taken by the school to welcome the community and build relationships with the school's patrons.

b) To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?

Midvale Middle School has recognized the need to build collaborative networks, and has begun to put into action several plans to address this need. Working on the school's curriculum map has made many of the staff members aware of how they can collaborate on various topics across the curriculum. The staff has indicated a willingness to use the curriculum map to aid in the development of collaborative teams.

Within several departments, the Visiting Team has observed the beginnings of both vertical and horizontal teaming in an effort to support student learning. The Visiting Team has also observed enrichment groups within homerooms and teambuilding within classes that promotes collaboration among students as well. The use of the ZAP program for eighth graders, after-school tutoring, morning and evening media center access, SEOP conferences, job shadowing, and the career fair are all good examples of programs being implemented to support student learning.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

a) To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?

The faculty and staff at Midvale Middle School have numerous opportunities for professional development, both at the school and district level. The Visiting Team noted that several departments are beginning to focus on group participation in professional development, and recommends that the entire staff begin to focus on professional development, which will address the school's action plan and needs of the community.

b) To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?

The Visiting Team has observed that the administration of Midvale Middle School is striving to develop a culture of collaboration and continuous

improvement. Teachers, parents, students, and support staff members believe that the administration is receptive to their views and to new ideas. The Visiting Team has also observed the beginning steps of the faculty and staff toward a more collaborative environment, and recommends that the faculty, staff, and administration continue to work toward building that culture among all stakeholders.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI

Most Utah public junior high/middle schools are not accredited through NAAS, only by the USOE – it is their choice to join NAAS or not.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

- a) To what extent is the school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?
 - The administration and teachers clearly connected the action plan to the student achievement data, in that they are concerned about the areas of math and language arts. The analysis of the departmental and focus groups reports drove the action plan steps. The teachers, staff, and administration were very honest in the assessment of their strong and weak areas. As a consolidated whole, the faculty is very devoted to student achievement and committed to making changes that will positively affect achievement. This thinking is reflected in the school's action plan.
- b) To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?
 - The Visiting Team found that teacher after teacher and the administration are firm in their desire to help students achieve. They have a plan in action and are working toward the end result of positive academic improvement. The departments are resolved to critically analyze information and revisit the action plan yearly as an ongoing process.
- c) How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the school-wide action plan appear to be?
 - There is sufficient evidence that continual follow-through will take place at

Midvale Middle School. There were many comments that the school has done too much work to let it stop now. They are moving forward, and that is the resolve of most teachers and the administration. Midvale Middle School's plan includes teamwork and collaboration that will continue to be the focus for class instruction and student improvement.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The administration, teachers, staff, and community of Midvale Middle School are commended for the amount of work they have put into the self-evaluation process through the Utah State Office of Education and the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools. It is apparent that many hours of work have been spent on the various components of the self-study, which will ultimately create higher student achievement.
- The Visiting Team commends the administration, teachers, and staff for creating a positive, safe, and trusting learning environment for students, as well as the custodial staff that works hard to maintain a clean school. The teachers are commended for creating student-oriented programs that raise the bar for student improvement, including the ZAP program, after-school tutoring, morning and evening media center access, and community nights. Teachers' use of technology in classroom instruction and student use of technology is to be commended.
- The Visiting Team commends the administration, teachers, and staff for acknowledging the diversity of Midvale Middle School and working to unify the various groups of students and parents.
- The Visiting Team commends the educators of Midvale Middle School for their commitment to positive student achievement and professionalism in teaching students through use of creative and varying methods of instruction.
- The Visiting Team commends the students for their desire to obtain an education, their dedication to school and learning, their trust in the teachers, staff, and administration, and their commitment to Midvale Middle School.

Recommendations:

• The Visiting Team recommends that Midvale Middle School continue to support the self-study process each year by collecting and analyzing student data that is

continually generated through assessment. The faculty and staff should systematically update the action plan to meet the needs of the student population, using the school profile as a living, breathing guide for positive student improvement.

- It is recommended that the educators of Midvale Middle School further develop the culture of collaboration within and between departments. Research shows that collaboration is an essential part of a healthy learning environment and paramount to student achievement in this changing world.
- The Visiting Team recommends the Midvale Middle School desired results for student learning and mission statement be visually displayed throughout the school and each classroom. Teachers should use the DRSLs and mission statement's vocabulary daily in their instruction.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the administration, teachers, and staff continue working on the process of unifying the various groups at the school, acknowledging that such unification takes time to develop. It is a continuing and ongoing involvement of all stakeholders.